

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 13, 2002 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendments made in response thereto. Reconsideration of the grounds of objection and rejection is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the remarks herein.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-7 and 11-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by "The Six Levels of a Happy Marriage" by Medard Laz. Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Laz in view of "Let's Make a Memory" by Gloria Gaither et al. Claims 8-10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Amendment to the Claims

Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable claim 8. New claim 20 similarly includes all the limitations of allowable claim 9 and its base claim, and new claim 21 includes all the limitation of allowable claim 10 and its base claim.

Independent claims 11 and 16 do not have dependent claims that correspond to allowable claims 8-10. However, as the Examiner found claims 8-10 to be allowable, Applicant has amended independent claims 11 and 16 to include the limitations of claims 8 and 9.

Claims 1, 11, 16, 20 and 21 distinguish patentably from Laz and should now be allowed.

Dependent Claims 2-7, 12-15, 17-18 and 22-23 are of course allowable on at least the same basis as independent Claims 1, 11, 16 and 21.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that further amendments are necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, or if the Examiner believes that a personal interview would be advantageous in order to more expeditiously resolve any remaining issues, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with this application, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (Attorney Docket No T2739-906589) and credit any excess fees to the same Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

MILES & STOCKBRIDGE P.C.

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App. No. 09/661,447: Marked-up Version of Claims

1 1. A method for enabling a conflict resolution among two or more parties,
2 comprising:
3 providing a script to be spoken by at least one of the two or more parties, the
4 script including a plurality of phrases, each phrase corresponding to the beginning of a
5 respective statement;
6 positioning a [portable object] rug at a location for the two or more parties to
7 physically position themselves with respect to the [portable object] rug for engaging
8 in a discussion;
9 extending an invitation by a first party to at least one second party for
10 physically positioning themselves at said location in close proximity to the positioned
11 [portable object] rug;
12 initiating a discussion corresponding to the script by the first party at said
13 location, and engaging the second party in a discourse that relates to the conflict from
14 the perspective of the first party; and
15 continuing the discussion according to the script, with each of the remaining
16 parties speaking in sequence each of the plurality of phrases together with respective
17 additional discourse that relates to the conflict from the perspective of the speaking
18 party, while the parties remain at the location, to encourage respectful and safe
19 behavior.

1 11. (Twice Amended) A method for enabling a conflict resolution process
2 to be conducted by two or more parties in mutual conflict who have positioned
3 themselves in proximity to a conflict resolution area, said two or more parties having

4 been pre-instructed as to a script and a set of instructions to be followed in connection
5 with said script, the method comprising:
6 speaking by one of the two or more parties to another of the two or more
7 parties a set of statements according to the script and the set of instructions; and
8 repeating said speaking by each remaining party of the two or more parties
9 until all parties have spoken while remaining in proximity to the conflict resolution
10 area to encourage respectful and safe behavior;
11 wherein said conflict resolution area is a specific [, predetermined] location
12 [that has been] identified by the two or more parties as a conflict resolution area by a
13 rug or a sheet about which the parties position themselves.

1 16. A kit for enabling conflict resolution among two or more parties
2 comprising:
3 a portable object, said portable object adapted to be used as a physical and
4 symbolic focus for convening a conflict resolution discussion; and
5 a set of instructions for use in association with said portable object, to
6 encourage participants involved in a mutual conflict to encourage each other to
7 physically convene around the portable object and mutually encourage each other to
8 reach a resolution to the conflict;
9 said portable object and kit being contained in a container enabling the kit to
10 be transported about to various venues.